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THE DYNAMICS OF GRAPHIC LANGUAGE IN COMICS FROM THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA: 1950–2025

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This paper investigates the evolution of comics in the Republic of Moldova through the perspective of representative authors, artistic techniques, main characteristics, and the editorial context. The research focuses on the analysis of comics published in the pages of periodical publications between 1950 and 2025. The results of the study reveal that during the period 1950–1990 the aesthetics were initially dominated by monochrome ink drawing, gradually highlighting techniques that incorporated watercolour colour spots. Beginning with 1991, a substantial thematic and technical diversification can be observed, supported by numerous visual artists. At the beginning of the 21st century, the graphic paradigm is marked by the transition to the digital environment; however, traditional graphic techniques have not been excluded, generating hybrid workflows in the creation of comics. The study emphasizes the aesthetic continuity of local comics, grounded in the tradition of book illustration and national satirical graphics, organically adapted to contemporary technological innovations. This study was conducted within the research project 25.80012.0807.53SE – Valorization and Safeguarding of Comics from the Republic of Moldova (1945–2025) as an Integral Part of the National Cultural Heritage.

Key words: comics, traditional graphic techniques, digital graphic techniques, artists.

INTRODUCTION

Comics published in the press of the Republic of Moldova developed in close connection with the tradition of book illustration and the technological specifics of printing from the 1950s to 2025, while in the last decades of the 21st century, international influences became noticeable. Periodical publications in the country, such as *Scânteia Leninistă*, *Chipăruș*, *Steluța*, *Alunelul*, *Micul Prinț*, *A-mic*, *Aquarelle*, and *Florile Dalbe*, served as the main editorial platforms for comics, contributing to the formation of a local graphic tradition. The analysis of materials published between 1950 and 2025 highlights both the dominant stylistic characteristics and the evolution of artistic techniques used by the authors.

PURPOSE

The research aims to analyze the transformations of the visual language of comics in the Republic of Moldova between 1950 and 2025, focusing on the editorial context, representative artists, graphic techniques, and the main characteristics of each developmental period. The methodology combines



documentation-through the identification, selection, and study of graphic materials with diachronic analysis of multiple comics, iconographic and comparative analysis methods, and the synthesis of collected data. The results present a systematization of the stages of comic evolution in the Republic of Moldova, along with the representative artists and the graphic techniques they employed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In children's magazines from the Moldavian SSR (1945–1991) and later from the Republic of Moldova (1991–2000), illustrators primarily employed traditional techniques based on manual drawing and direct colouring on physical media. The most common methods included ink drawing on paper, complemented by watercolour or coloured pencils. The workflow was relatively standardized: the artist first created pencil sketches, then outlined the final form in ink using a pen or brush, and finally applied colour.

Many comics published in children's magazines were monochrome due to the technical limitations of printing at the time. Nevertheless, numerous examples include hand-applied colour accents. A notable case is the illustrations by V. Cehmister for the magazine *Steluța*, where ink is combined with broad watercolour washes. In these compositions, character outlines are rendered with fine ink lines, while backgrounds and environmental elements are painted in warm watercolour tones, creating a vibrant visual effect characteristic of children's comics.

During the 1950s–1960s, comics in the Moldavian SSR were dominated by monochrome ink drawing, a technique adapted to editorial printing requirements and influenced by the illustration aesthetics of the era. One of the most representative comic artists of this period was Alexei Grabco, known for the series *Trică și Ciupică*, published in *Scânteia Leninistă*. Grabco's graphic style is characterized by clear, expressive, and dynamic line work executed exclusively in black ink. Through the use of hatching and contrasting shadows, the artist conveyed volume and expressiveness without relying on colour. This approach allowed for a clear, easily reproducible graphic image. In many compositions of the period, firm ink outlines were complemented only by a few large, simple colour areas, giving the work a synthetic and expressive character.

From the 1960s to the 1970s, national comics began to exhibit greater diversity in artistic techniques, with mixed media becoming increasingly common. Artists combined ink drawing with watercolour and, occasionally, coloured pencils to achieve richer visual effects. In the *Trică și Ciupică* series, Grabco often applied watercolour patches over ink drawings to enhance the playful atmosphere and dynamic composition. Backgrounds were painted in warm tones-yellow, red, or ochre-while the details and expressions of the characters remained defined by black ink lines. Between 1970 and 1980, comics occasionally retained the characteristics of the previous period of artistic development in the region.

After 1990, following socio-cultural transformations in the Republic of Moldova, comics published in periodicals such as *Alunelul*, *a-Mic*, *Micul Prinț*, *Aquarelle*, and *Florile Dalbe* reflect an impressive thematic, stylistic, and technical diversification. This period highlights the works of comic artists such as Ana Evtușenco, Alexei Colîbneac, Iulian Melnic, Aureliu Resteu-Guțu, Margareta



Chițcatfi, Lică Sainciuc, P. Pruteanu, Gheorghe Petrea, Alexandr Gladîșev, E. Teleucă, Valeriu Curtu, Valeriu Ionițoi, Anatolii Smîșleaeu, N. Romanovschi, Boris Jankov, N. Tighineanu, Iurie Zavadschi, Iurie Simac, and Alexei Sainciuc. Some continued the tradition of manually produced comics, while others introduced more contemporary graphic solutions. Thus, by the late 1990s and early 2000s, a transition toward digital comic creation techniques became apparent.

In the early decades of the 21st century, digital techniques became widely employed, with artists using graphic tablets and digital illustration software to produce comics. Nevertheless, traditional methods-watercolour, ink, and coloured pencils-continued to be used, often in hybrid workflows. Table 1 presents a synthesis of the analysis of the evolution of graphic techniques employed during different periods in the production of comics in the Republic of Moldova.

Table 1.

Evolution of Graphic Techniques in the Field of Comics

Years	Editorial Context	Representative Artists	Predominant Techniques	Main Characteristics
1950–1965	Publication of comics in children's press (<i>Scântea Leninistă</i> magazine)	Alexei Grabco	Monochrome ink, watercolour	Linear ink drawing dominates, with simple compositions adapted to black and white printing. Among the first consistently serialized graphic narratives.
1966–1975	Expansion of publication in <i>Steluța</i> supplement of <i>Scântea Leninistă</i>	Alexei Grabco, V. Cehmister, D. Ianiuc, Alexandr Gladîșev, Aurel Guțu, Dumitru Trifan	Mixed technique: ink and watercolour, sometimes coloured pencils	The style of children's comics consolidates; painted backgrounds and more elaborate compositions appear. Comics become a regular feature of the magazines.
1976–1989	Period of less frequent comic appearances in periodicals	Alexei Grabco	Watercolour and ink	Style becomes more expressive and narrative. Colour is used more frequently to emphasize scene dynamics.
1990–1995	Cultural transition period after Moldova's independence; appearances in <i>Alunelul</i> magazine	Alexei Grabco, Alexei (Lică) Sainciuc, Ana Evtușenco, G. Gurban, Margareta Chițcatfi, Valeriu Curtu, Valeriu Ionițoi, Iurie Zavadschi, Iurie Simac, Alexandr Gladîșev,	Watercolour and ink, watercolour and coloured pencils	New comic creators emerge; styles become more varied and closer to contemporary illustration.
1996–2000	Diversification of comic authors and graphic approaches in terms of theme and colour	Alexei Colîbneac, Nona Mîndrescu, Iulian Melnic	Traditional mixed techniques; beginning use of digital tools	Graphic style becomes more diverse, closer to modern editorial illustration, while traditional techniques are still maintained.
2001–2025	Broad integration of digital comic creation techniques; online publication	Octavian Curoșu, Alex Bureț, Cătălin Enachi, Cristiana Grati, Inna Sacali, etc.	Digital and mixed techniques	Comics produced in collaborative teams; some artists develop graphic novels through international collaborations.



CONCLUSIONS

The study of the evolution of graphic techniques in the production of comics in the Republic of Moldova (1950–2025) highlights a continuous metamorphosis of the visual language, closely linked to the technological possibilities of each era. Although new technologies have reshaped the workflow, the analysis demonstrates the persistence of a local graphic identity that harmoniously integrates the tradition of book illustration and satirical graphics with contemporary innovation. Consequently, Moldovan comics have established themselves both nationally and internationally, thanks to numerous visual artists, not merely as editorial consumer products but also as a field of artistic heritage that warrants ongoing documentation and valorization.

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ВАСІЛІЄВ Н., ТРОШКІНА М.

ДИНАМІКА ГРАФІЧНОЇ МОВИ У КОМІКСАХ РЕСПУБЛІКИ МОЛДОВА 1950–2025 РОКІВ

У роботі проаналізовано еволюцію коміксів у Республіці Молдова крізь призму провідних авторів, художніх технік, основних характеристик та видавничого контексту. Дослідження зосереджується на аналізі коміксів, опублікованих на сторінках періодичних видань у період 1950–2025 років. Результати дослідження показують, що в період 1950–1990 років у естетиці спочатку домінував монохромний малюнок тушшю, а згодом поступово набирали популярності техніки, що передбачали використання кольорових плям у акварелі. Починаючи з 1991 року спостерігається істотна тематична та технічна диверсифікація, підтримана багатьма художниками-творцями коміксів. На початку XXI століття графічна парадигма позначена переходом до цифрового середовища, проте традиційні графічні техніки не виключаються, що породжує гібридні напрямки створення коміксів. Дослідження підкреслює естетичну спадкоємність вітчизняних коміксів, засновану на традиції книжкової ілюстрації та вітчизняної сатиричної графіки, органічно адаптовану до сучасних технологічних інновацій. Це дослідження було проведено в рамках науково-дослідного проекту 25.80012.0807.53SE – «Вартість та збереження коміксів Республіки Молдова (1945–2025) як невід’ємної частини національної культурної спадщини».

Ключові слова: комікс, традиційні графічні техніки, цифрові графічні техніки, стиль, художники.